

'We need to define the three Ps - People, Process & Policy'

Junaid Shaikh, Managing Director of Roshanspace Brandcom, shares with **N Jayalakshmi** his insights on how and why it's important to have the right skill sets in place so that the OOH medium's inherent strengths and its fundamental power can be leveraged in the most effective manner.



Junaid Shaikh, Managing Director, Roshanspace Brandcom

As a leading OOH player, what do you think are the most critical skills needed in the industry today, especially in the context of market trends/requirements?

Having been an integral part of the industry for almost three generations, I have observed that the industry, due to its sheer potential, has always seen an upward overall trend. The reason for this is the medium itself - it's large, it's silent, it's non-switchable and it's focused on engaging the audience on the move. It essentially has a unique identity, which we can't really take away from it. So we need skill sets that understand the fundamental power of the OOH medium.

To cut it short, the more layers the industry has, the more difficult it would be to penetrate. The founders, the clients, the brand custodian, the middle men and the media owners need to establish a common platform, a platform that includes:

- a) Understanding of the medium and the various ways of engaging the audience to communicate the objective;
- b) A body that is only involved in research and development of the medium, 24x7, researching global trends and offerings;
- c) Financial expertise to formulate a structure/policy to increase cash flow, regulate credit terms and execute them using technology as its backbone;
- d) Common classification of media based on aesthetics, demographics, visibility, placement, traffic count and various other parameters that are in place for each site/medium and the location;
- e) Strict action against illegal sites / and backdoor policies framed to favour specific companies needs.

In short there is a need to define the three Ps - People, (the 'WHY?'), Process (the 'HOW?') and Policy (the 'What?').

Do you think there is a gap between the demand and the supply as far as critical skills for OOH are concerned?

Humans usually like to live and work in a predictable environment. We need to create it for them.

At this moment, there certainly is a gap in the supply, due to the requirement not being clearly defined by the stake holders. If the requirement is defined, skills sets are available, and people with the right attitude are available across other mediums of advertising; they don't necessarily have to be from OOH. They just need to undergo basic training based on the fundamentals and principles of OOH.

If the skill sets are used for the mundane, we will dilute their strength. Hence as I suggested earlier, all the SOPs need to be clearly

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documented and automated, so we create time and space to develop talent, practise skills and put them out there. At this moment, the time and efforts spent on follow-ups and firefighting are ailing the industry.

As an organisation how do you groom these skill sets? Do you have any special processes or initiatives in place for training and skill development? Can you take us through them?

At RoshanSpace we first set the importance of abiding by the principles and the ethos of our legacy built and sustained over 44 years. We share case studies of the extraordinary work that we have done over the years, and how we dealt with crisis and delivered campaigns in the most difficult circumstances. The heart of the organisation is in its roots, and the entire organisation works towards strengthening the roots, and continuously replenishing it. For us, our brand and the quality we deliver is above everything else and we all work towards it. No one is bigger than RoshanSpace as a brand, not even the directors.

There are certain key principles we follow:

- a) We have a zero tolerance policy for corporate politics;
- b) We encourage the team to be absolutely transparent and focus on simple living and high thinking;
- c) Ideas, innovation, automation are in our DNA, and we are absolutely open to experimenting and executing them;
- d) We have classified our assets based on various parameters into Iconic, Platinum, Gold, Silver, and Bronze, hence easing decision making for our clients;
- e) We are constantly looking for loopholes and gaps and we work towards eliminating them;
- f) Incentivising good work and hitting the bullseye is always awarded;
- g) We protect our people and make sure that we are quick to take critical decisions.

Fact is that at Roshanspace we built our business to reflect the way we think, act and communicate so that it impacts the industry at large. Our case studies and the best practices we have embedded in our teams and our organisation are actually endless.

What do you think are the top challenges in the area of skill development in this industry today?

Well, first and foremost unpredictability in the industry, lack of planning and last minute manoeuvring due to unforeseen circumstances, have been a real challenge. As I said earlier, a lot of time is spent by resources on closing the campaigns, receiving purchase orders, follow

up on payments, and all of this takes up their precious time, which otherwise could be used for thinking, ideating and innovating. Speed is of utmost importance in being able to excel, and anything that reduces speed and increases inefficiency will never help in developing skills.

The second challenge in developing skills is the fragmentation, which is due to lack of a defined entry barrier and the existence of corruption at various levels - those investing millions trying to up the game verses those who use the power of bureaucracy to enter the industry and encourage corruption will never be on the same level of quality of delivery.

Do you think there is a need for the industry as a whole to put in place certain policies/standards/group as far as skill development is concerned?

Well certainly yes - the brain, the body, the fuel and the engine need to be working intelligently and under control, while the heart and the pulse of the industry, who are the stake holders, need to be united and neutral. To elaborate, we require:

- a) In-depth training manual to develop skill sets;
- b) A policy that is neutral and a win-win for all stake-holders;
- c) A group of professionals that are unbiased and willing to sacrifice their self-interest and think solely about the growth of the industry and about setting benchmarks;
- d) A team that is at speed to execute plans and policies at various levels;
- e) Cutting edge technology and automation to drive all of the above.

Any other thoughts you'd like to share in this regard?

Finally, I have only one thing to say - it's not about how much you do, but about how well you do that sets you apart from the crowd.

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